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Excellence Lesson

**Step #2 Overview:
Gathering Community Feedback**

Introduction: Thanks for tuning into this Excellence Lesson covering Step #2: Gather and Analyze Community Feedback, as part of the National PTA School of Excellence program. This training will specifically cover the first portion of Step #2, where your PTA will gather feedback around family engagement trends in your community.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

In 2022, National PTA updated the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

- More action-oriented tools and information for schools and PTAs to use were created.
- The Standards now include goals and a set of indicators that further describe the Standard in action.



Standards Introduction: Let's begin with a discussion of the National Standards for Family School Partnerships, which form for basis for the School of Excellence program.

Recently, the National Standards were updated to provide better, more action-oriented tools and information that schools and PTAs can use in improving family, school and community engagement. One notable update is that the Standards now include goals and a set of indicators that further describe the Standards in action.

To better align the School of Excellence program and the program outcomes to the updated National Standards, the required community feedback portion of the program has been revamped to align the questions and the methods for gathering feedback with the Standards updates, especially the new Goals.

Gathering Community Feedback

This is a pivotal step in the program as all other steps will build upon the work you do here:

- Based on your community feedback results you will create and implement an action plan for school improvement.
- Towards the end of the year, you will gather feedback from your community once more to measure your progress.
- You will be required to provide National PTA a summary of your feedback and verify that you collected the feedback using one of the verified methods.



Step #2 Overview: Gathering community feedback allows your PTA to touch base with your community to better understand family engagement trends related to the National Standards. This is a pivotal step in the program as all other steps will build upon the work you do now.

Based on the feedback you gather, you will create and implement your action plan for school improvement. Then, towards the end of the year, you will gather feedback from your community once more to measure your progress in enhancing family engagement.

In order to earn the School of Excellence designation, you must complete each of the program steps. So, to verify that you completed this fundamental program step, you will be required to complete a Community Feedback Form and provide National PTA a summary of your feedback, including the number of people engaged, and verification that you collected the feedback using one of the provided methods.

Community Feedback Methods

- National PTA provides two methods for gathering feedback from your community and we recommend each PTA consider using a combination of methods to best reach their community:

Deploy the Survey



Conduct a Listening Session



- Both methods are designed for PTAs to gain thorough feedback on trends in overall family-school partnerships in their community that they can easily connect back to the action-oriented Standards and Goals.

Community Feedback Methods: National PTA provides two methods for gathering feedback from your community – deploying a Community Feedback Survey and conducting a Community Feedback Listening Session.

PTAs can choose whichever method works best for their community as both options have their merits. However, we recommend each PTA consider using a combination of methods to best reach their community.

For each of the methods, National PTA provides required questions that will help your PTA gain thorough feedback on overall family-school partnerships that then easily connect back to the action-oriented Standards and Goals.

I'll now provide an overview of each community feedback options and will speak to the specific requirements for using each method, as well as support materials provided by National PTA.

Community Feedback Methods

Host a Listening Session

Listening sessions or focus groups bring together parents, families and/or community members to express their opinions, share ideas and the exchanges with the community in real-time.

- Benefits to these sessions include:
 - Opening space for specific and focused discussions about school improvement
 - Community building through meaningful conversations and reducing survey fatigue
- Aim to include as many people as possible in your listening session to gather feedback aligned to your larger school community.
 - Host multiple sessions, across different times
 - Host virtual sessions
 - Host sessions in multiple languages



Let's start with **Community Feedback Listening Sessions**. Through this method your PTA will bring together parents, families and/or community members to discuss the provided, *and required, community feedback discussion questions*. Listening sessions provide families and others the opportunity to express their opinions and share ideas. These exchanges with the community and the discourse shared will help your PTA identify areas for improvement and develop community-based ideas for addressing the areas.

Benefits to these sessions include opening space for specific and focused discussions about school improvement, community building through meaningful conversations and reducing survey fatigue.

While you are not required to meet a certain minimum number of people engaged, your PTA should aim to reach as many families as possible through appropriately sized listening session groups, to ensure your feedback is accurate and representative of your entire community. Consider hosting -

- Multiple sessions in one night, so the groups are small enough for thorough discussion where everyone is heard;
- Several listening sessions on different days and at different times to ensure people with different schedules can participate; or
- Virtual listening sessions to reach folks who may be unable to make an in-person session or more comfortable participating virtually.

Additionally, it may be more impactful to use listening sessions to connect and build community with those in your school who have a preferred language other than English than through a translated survey. Plus, compared to securing translation services for the survey questions, it may be easier to find someone who speaks the languages spoken in your community and is willing/able to facilitate the listening session(s).

Community Feedback Listening Sessions

Tools and Requirements

- **Tools:** National PTA has provided a School of Excellence Listening Session Guide to help you in planning and implementing your listening session. The guide also includes the minimum required discussion questions for you to use in the session.
- **Requirements:** Verification is required for each community feedback method. Document the following information if using community feedback sessions:
 - Attendance to the listening session
 - Thorough and comprehensive notes from the discussions that took place
 - Evidence of the listening session for verification – this could be photos from the session or of the attendance sheet, your recoded notes from the session and/or your presentation/overview for the session.

Community Feedback Listening Sessions – Tools: If this community feedback method intrigues you, but your PTA has never conducted listening sessions before – never fear! National PTA has provided a School of Excellence Listening Session Guide to help you in planning and implementing your listening session. The guide includes overall advice for before, during and after the session and, most importantly, provides *the minimum, required discussion questions for you to use in the session.*

These questions are aligned to each of the National Standards, so based on the discussions you have, you will be able to easily connect feedback back to the National Standards and the Goals.

Community Feedback Listening Sessions – Requirements: Because verification is required for each community feedback method, if using this method, we recommend you document the following information which you will then share with National PTA through the Community Feedback Form:

- Attendance to the listening session
- Thorough and comprehensive notes from the discussions that took place
- Evidence of the listening session for verification – this could be photos from the session or of the attendance sheet, your recoded notes from the session and/or your presentation/overview for the session.

Community Feedback Methods

Deploy the Survey

- The **required** survey questions align to the National Standards, as well as the Goals outlined for each Standard, and you are required to use questions as provided by National PTA.
- There are (3) options available for deploying the required questions:
 - Deploy all Community Feedback Questions (52 Questions)
 - Deploy all Community Feedback Questions for Goal 1 (26 Questions)
 - Deploy all Community Feedback Questions for Goal 2 (26 Questions)
- To choose between the survey options, review the questions asked between the each of the Goals and consider:
 - Areas most relevant to your PTA and/or school community,
 - Areas that may lead to the most impact in your community, or
 - Areas relevant to existing work in your community.



The other method for gathering community feedback is by deploying a survey. For this method, National PTA has provided a set survey questions that align to each of the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and the goals outlined for each Standard. You are required to use the survey questions as provided by National PTA to ensure your feedback can be easily connected to the National Standards and best practices in family engagement.

To provide flexibility and customization, however, your PTA has three options, or versions, available for deploying the required questions:

1. Deploy all Community Feedback Questions (52 Questions)
2. Deploy all Community Feedback Questions for Goal 1 (26 Questions)
3. Deploy all Community Feedback Questions for Goal 2 (26 Questions)

To gather the most detailed and relevant information from your community, we recommend deploying the entire 52 question survey. While longer, this version of the survey will provide you with more detailed information across metrics and indicators. This provides your PTA with a more comprehensive snapshot of how family engagement is showing up in your community and will allow you to prioritize your efforts to make the most impact.

However, if your school or district already conducts a yearly survey, or if you have heard concerns from your community around survey fatigue, you may prefer to deploy one of the shorter, goal-specific survey versions. In that case, you can deploy the survey with questions focused on either Goal 1 or Goal 2. To choose between these two versions, review the questions asked and consider the goals and areas that will be most relevant to your PTA and/or may lead to the most impact in your community.

Community Feedback Surveys Tools and Requirements

- **Tools:** National PTA provides the survey materials you need to effectively gather community feedback including:
 - Printable versions of each survey option
 - Virtual versions of each survey option
 - Template survey addendums that overview the survey purpose and the program
 - Spanish translations for each of the survey version
- **Requirements:** Besides using the required questions, your PTA can choose to deploy the survey digitally or on paper. There is also no required minimum number of surveys.

If using this method, we recommend you maintain the following information:

- The total number of survey respondents – combine numbers from all methods used
- For online surveys, download the results collected and upload for verification
- For paper surveys, use a tally sheet and take a photo to upload for verification

Community Feedback Surveys – Tools: National PTA provides resources and materials that will support your PTA if you choose deploying a survey as your method for gathering community feedback, this includes:

- Printable or digital versions of each survey option,
- A template survey addendum that you can customize to overview the survey purpose and the program and
- National PTA also provides Spanish translations for each of the survey versions. By request, additional translations are available in Arabic, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese and Portuguese.

Community Feedback Surveys – Requirements: Your PTA can use at-home or in-person surveys, or any combination of both. There also is no minimum number of responses required. However, your PTA should aim to collect as many responses as possible, so you have enough information to inform your action plan. A minimum your PTA can strive for is 20 responses from both PTA and non-PTA members alike.

As verification is required for each community feedback method, we recommend you maintain the following information if using community feedback surveys:

- The total number of survey respondents – combine numbers from all the methods used
- For online surveys, download the results collected to an Excel workbook or PDF file
- For paper surveys, create a tally sheet and take a photo of it, or the surveys you received back. You can upload either of these to your Community Feedback Form as verification of your feedback method

Conclusion

Step #2: Gather and Analyze Community Feedback

Today we covered:

- Gathering community feedback and the fundamental role your results play in successfully completing the School of Excellence program,
- The two community feedback options available to your PTA – surveys and listening sessions, and
- Requirements your PTA must meet for each of the community feedback options.

Thanks for tuning in for this Excellence Lesson –
Email us at Excellence@PTA.org for any questions!

Conclusion – Collecting Community Feedback: Thanks for checking out this Excellence Lesson discussing Step #2: Gather Community Feedback. Today we covered -

- The first portion of Step #2 – gathering community feedback – and the fundamental role your results play in successfully completing the School of Excellence program;
- The two community feedback options available to your PTA – surveys and listening sessions; and
- Requirements your PTA must meet for each of the community feedback options.

Stay tuned in the coming months for more information on the second portion of Step #2 – analyzing feedback. But in the interim, if you have any questions, be sure to email us at Excellence@PTA.org for any questions. We are here to help!